

COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN – SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

RESOURCES AND BENEFITS FOR COMMERCIALLY SEXUAL EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Children and youth who are commercially sexually exploited are victims of sexual assault, kidnapping, and human trafficking. As victims, they are entitled to resources and benefits available to crime victims under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and the Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVC). As youth, they are also eligible for food and medical assistance through the state Department of Social and Health Services.

Exploited youth may be U.S. citizens, Lawful Permanent Residents, or foreign nationals. Some may have been exploited within a city/town, others may have been trafficked across state lines, or internationally. Below are the different types of resources and benefits available to victims who are under 18 years old (minors).

DOMESTIC MINOR VICTIMS

Victims under 18 who are U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents are eligible to receive food and comprehensive medical benefits through the state Department of Social and Health Services. Youth who are 18 or younger are eligible to receive Basic Food Assistance (food stamps) and comprehensive medical assistance through the Medicaid program (which also includes mental health services). Applications for both may be obtained online:

Basic Food Assistance: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2ws03esaapps/onlinecso/applying.asp>

Medicaid program: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2ws03esaapps/onlinecso/applying.asp>

As victims of crime, exploited youth are also eligible to access financial assistance under Crime Victims Compensation (CVC). Crime Victims Compensation can help with expenses such as medical benefits, wage replacement, prescription coverage, counseling, benefits for permanent disability, travel and property reimbursement. CVC is a payer of last resort. Application for Crime Victims Compensation and additional information is available online:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/CrimeVictims/FilingClaims/Default.asp>

The Washington State Office of Crime Victims Advocacy also funds a number of Crime Victims Service Centers (CVSCs) and Community Sexual Assault Programs (CSAPs) state-wide to respond, assist, and support victims of crime, which includes exploited youth. Advocates are available to assist youth and/or their non-offending caregivers/family members in accessing services and benefits. For a list of Crime Victim Service Centers and Community Sexual Assault Programs statewide, please log onto:

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/ocvaGuide/results2.asp?categoryid=1>

FOREIGN UNACCOMPANIED MINOR VICTIMS

Victims under 18 who do not have legal resident or U.S. citizenship status may obtain benefits and services (food, medical, shelter) similar to those of U.S. citizens through the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services' Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM) program.

They may be eligible for the T-Visa, which allows victims of trafficking to remain in the U.S. and become eligible for work authorization. After three years, they may apply to adjust their status to Lawful Permanent Resident. As unaccompanied minors, the program also places them in culturally appropriate foster homes, group homes, or independent living arrangements appropriate to their developmental needs. Through the program, youth victims may receive intensive case management, education, health care, mental health counseling, independent living skills training, and many other services. The Unaccompanied Refugee Minors program also assists in family reunification and repatriation services, when appropriate for the victim. Children are eligible to remain in foster care until they turn 18 or a higher age, depending on the foster care rules of the state. National programs with local affiliates that assist unaccompanied minors include:

United Conference of Catholic Bishops: <http://www.nccbuscc.org>

Lutheran Community Services: <http://www.lcsnw.org>

Federal, state, and local officials must notify DHHS within 24 hours of discovering a child who might be a foreign victim of trafficking: childtrafficking@acf.hhs.gov or 202-205-4582

OTHER RESOURCES

If you think you have come in contact with an exploited youth or victim of human trafficking, call:

The Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network 206-245-0782

The Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force 1-888-428-7581

National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 1-800-THE LOST